

# Safety Matters

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## FIRE SAFETY FACTS

October is National Fire Prevention Month. Each year, more than 4,000 Americans die in fires, more than 25,000 are injured in fires, and more than 100 firefighters are killed while on duty. Eighty three percent of all civilian fire deaths occurred in residences. Many of these fires could have been prevented.

Cooking is the third leading cause of fire deaths and the leading cause of injury among people ages 65 and older.

Direct loss due to fires is estimated at nearly **\$8.6 billion** annually. Intentionally set structure fires resulted in an estimated **\$664 million** in property damage.

In order to protect yourself, it is important to understand the basic characteristics of fire.

- **Fire is FAST.** In just two minutes, a fire can become life-threatening. In five minutes, a residence can be engulfed in flames.
- **Fire is DARK.** Fire produces gases that make you disoriented and drowsy. Instead of being awakened by a fire, you may fall into a deeper sleep. Asphyxiation is the leading cause of fire deaths, exceeding burns by a three- to- one ratio.
- **Fire is HOT.** Heat and smoke from fire can be more dangerous than the flames. Inhaling the superhot air can sear your lungs.

### FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

#### BEFORE A FIRE

The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family, and your property in the event of a fire:

#### SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

- Install smoke alarms. Properly working smoke alarms decrease your chances of dying in a fire by half.
- Place smoke alarms on every level of your residence, including the basement.
- Install a working carbon monoxide detector in the common area of the bedrooms.
- Test and clean smoke alarms once a month and replace batteries at least once a year (each October is suggested). Replace smoke alarms once every 10 years.

#### COOKING SAFETY

- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Always wear short or tight-fitting sleeves when you cook.
- Keep towels, pot holders and curtains away from flames
- Never use the range or oven to heat your home.
- Have the proper type fire extinguisher available and know how to properly use it

#### ESCAPING THE FIRE

- Have an escape plan. Review escape routes with your family.
- Make sure windows are not nailed or painted shut.
- Teach family members to stay low to the floor by crawling, where the air is safer, when escaping from a fire.
- In a high-rise, never lock or block fire exits or doorways, halls or stairways. Never prop stairway or other fire doors open. Fire doors are meant to slow the fire and give people more time to escape.

#### HEATING SOURCE

- If using space heaters at home, place them at least three feet away from flammable/ combustible materials like newspapers, magazines, draperies, furniture, etc.
- Electric space heaters should always be directly plugged into a wall outlet, never an extension cord or power strip
- Use only the type of fuel designated for your space heater.

#### MATCHES/LIGHTERS AND SMOKING

- Keep matches/lighters away from children.
- Never smoke in bed or when drowsy or medicated.
- If you must smoke, do it responsibly.

#### ELECTRICAL WIRING

- Inspect extension cords for frayed or exposed wires or loose plugs
- Make sure outlets and switches have cover plates and no exposed wiring.
- Make sure wiring does not run under rugs, over nails, or across high traffic areas.
- Do not overload extension cords, power strips or outlets.

**Inspect your home for fire safety and prevention on a regular basis!**

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## NEWS & NOTES

The Fire Prevention Week theme for 2021: 'Smoke alarms: The sound of fire safety' Do you know the sounds of fire safety?

Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms make specific sounds for different situations:

A continuous set of three loud beeps -- beep, beep, beep -- means smoke or fire. Get out, call 9-1-1, and stay out.

\* A single chirp every 30 or 60 seconds means the battery is low and must be changed.

\* Chirping that continues after the battery has been replaced means the alarm is at the end of its life and the entire unit must be replaced.

Homeowners sometimes unplug or remove the device after a false alarm. That's a very dangerous move.

\* The kitchen fire alarm is the one most likely to be removed because residents burn toast or food and don't want to be bothered by the sound. Then they don't bother to put it back in place. In home fire deaths, some 23 percent of smoke alarms had been purposely disconnected.

\* Cooking is still the number one cause of home fires and injuries.

One of the most significant things you can do during Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 3-9, 2021), is to update your smoke alarm system.

\* Replace batteries and check the alarm to be sure it works.

\* Install another smoke alarm in a different area of the house, such as near bedrooms. Interconnected alarms that sound at the same time increase safety.

\* Consider having smoke alarms hard-wired into the electrical system. Permanent installation eliminates the task of changing batteries. Hard-wired alarms worked in 91 percent of home fires in recent years, while battery operated units worked only 75 percent of the time. More than half of smoke alarms in reported fires and two-thirds of alarms in homes with fire deaths were battery operated.



"This job does require some travel, but nothing more than crossing the road."

## HALLOWEEN RIDDLES

1. You're in a room and there's a ghost in the room, but you are the only one in the room. How is this possible?
2. When does Halloween come after Christmas?
3. What 2 letters can you use to spell candy?
4. What candies do zombies hate?

**ANSWERS ON PAGE 2**

## FIRE SAFETY FACTS (Continued from page 1)

### DURING A FIRE

If your clothes catch on fire, you should:

- Stop, drop, and roll until the fire is extinguished.

### DO NOT PANIC

- Do not assume someone else already called the fire department; get out of the house then call the Fire Department.

### ESCAPE A FIRE

- Check closed doors with the back of your hand to feel for heat before you open them.
- If the door is **hot** do not open it. Find a second way out, such as a window. If you cannot escape through a window, hang a white sheet outside the window to alert firefighters to your presence.
- Stuff the cracks around the door with towels, rags, bedding or tape and cover vents to keep smoke out.
- If there is a phone in the room where you are trapped, call the fire department again and tell them exactly where you are.
- If the door is cold slowly open it and ensure that fire and/or smoke is not blocking your escape route. If your escape route is blocked, shut the door and use another escape route.
- If clear, leave immediately and close the door behind you. Be prepared to crawl.

### AFTER A FIRE

- Once you are out of the building, **STAY OUT!** Do not go back inside for any reason.
- If you are with a burn victim or are a burn victim yourself call 911, cool and loosely cover your burns until emergency units arrive.
- If you are a tenant contact the landlord.
- Tell the fire department if you know of anyone trapped in the building.
- Only enter when the fire department tells you it is safe to do so

**FIRE SAFETY IS YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY...FIRE STOPS WITH YOU!**

Have a  
spook-  
tacular  
Halloween!

## STORE IT PROPERLY TO PREVENT BACK INJURIES

At home or on the job, storing heavy items properly can cut your risk of back injuries.

Some heavy items should not be stored on the floor, which might seem counter-intuitive. People tend to store heavy items on the floor, since it offers the best stability and support. Heavy objects won't fall and cause injury when stored on the floor.

But while that's great for storage, it is terrible for retrieval.

Heavy objects that are frequently lifted should be stored at waist level rather than on the floor or shoulder level.

Lifting a heavy object from the floor -- even when you lift properly -- is twice as risky as lifting an object while you stand upright, according to Safety and Health Magazine.

That makes perfect sense when you think about it. To retrieve something from the floor, you'll have to bend down to get it. Even if you lift with your legs and bend your knees, you are still lifting the weight of your body plus the object, putting stress on your back.

Heavy items stored shoulder level or above are not only at risk of falling, but also put strain on the neck and shoulders.

At waist level, you can easily hold an object close to the body to move it while you maintain a straight spine.

If you do have to take something off the floor, lift properly:

- \* When you must lift a load from the floor, keep your head up, back straight, bend at the hips -- not the waist -- and lift with the legs.
- \* Do not twist your body as you walk. Instead, shift your whole form.
- \* When you're ready to set down the load, use your leg muscles to lower it to the floor, clear of fingers and toes.



## AVOIDING ELECTRICAL HAZARDS WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

If you have a home office or work from home please follow these electrical safety tips to keep you and your home safe from electrical hazards.

- 1) Avoid overloading outlets and do not, under any circumstances, daisy chain. **Daisy chaining** is a term that refers to the practice of plugging a power strip or extension cord into a power strip. This is **dangerous** because an excessive amount of power is being drawn from one single wall outlet, which means the power strip or wall receptacle could easily overload, overheat and catch fire.
- 2) Unplug appliances when not in use to save energy and minimize the risk of shock or fire
- 3) Regularly inspect electrical cords and extension cords for damage
- 4) Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis; never for a period longer than 90 days. If an extension cord is needed longer than 90 days then a permanent outlet should be installed.
- 5) Never plug a space heater or fan into an extension cord or power strip
- 6) Never run cords under rugs / carpets, doors, or windows
- 7) Plug in smartly. Make sure cords do not become tripping hazards
- 8) Keep papers and other potential combustibles at least three feet away from space heaters and other heat sources
- 9) Make sure you use proper wattage for lamps / lighting
- 10) Make sure your home has smoke alarms. Test them monthly, change batteries yearly (each October during Fire Prevention Month is suggested), and replace the unit every 10 years

Wherever you work, it's always important to be safe.



"If the sticker shock for this drug lasts more than 4 hours, call your insurance company."

**"EDUCATION  
IS NOT preparation  
FOR life; education  
IS life ITSELF."**

John Dewey

## HALLOWEEN RIDDLES ANSWERS

1. You are a ghost.
2. In the dictionary!
3. C (and) Y (Candy) or M&M
4. Lifesavers!